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UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

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REFLECTION:

"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The season's change is beginning to show all around us. The monarch butterflies are flying southward . . . The evening twilight approaches earlier each day . . . The corn on the cob has been harvested . . . Pumpkins are ripening in the fields . . . Autumn heralds its approach with colorful displays of leaves in yards and forests. It is a time for welcoming and considering change; a time for releasing the old and making way for new . . .

UCC GENERAL SYNOD 33
Report

United Church of Christ's 33rd General Synod was a virtual event July 11 – 18, 2021. The theme was *Rooted in Love*. The approved resolutions can be the basis for educational programming, small group discussions, and development of new initiatives in local congregations. Links to read about the nine approved resolutions are listed here:

- Declaration For A Just Peace Between Palestine And Israel
- Resolution To Advocate And Act To Change The Cash Bail Bond System To Eliminate Racial And Social Injustices Inherent In The Present System
- A Resolution To Ban The Practice Of Conversion Therapy
- A Commitment To Gender Safety & Equity In Ministry Settings
- A Resolution To Declare And Respond To Racism As A Public Health Crisis.
  This was sponsored by the Council of Health and Human Services Ministries who have already created a curriculum to assist churches.

- A Resolution Encouraging To End 128 Years Of War Between The United States Of America And The Hawaiian Kingdom An earlier article provides more background.
- "Who Will Speak For The Trees?" A Resolution On The Rights Of Nature
- Becoming A Church Of Contemplatives In Action
- A Resolution To Recognize The United Nations International Decade For People Of African Descent (2015-2024)

Thanks to everyone who "visited" the UCC Health and Wholeness Advocacy exhibit in the virtual Exhibit Hall at General Synod.

The UCC Wellness Ministries participated in a Celebration Event at General Synod, on Wednesday, July 14th. At this event, the **UCC Wellness Ministries presented its first Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation to the Southern New England Conference UCC (SNEUCC)**. During 2020 – 2021, the COVID-19 virus created an evolving situation most of us were not prepared to encounter. It was a challenging time for individuals, families, and groups and also UCC Congregations, Associations, and Conferences. The Southern New England Conference was recognized for its devotion to implementing the UCC Resolution: *Reclaiming the Church's Ministry of Health and Healing.* This was illustrated by the Conference's creative responses, its ways found to offer support, and its expanded methods of sharing helpful resources. Weekly COVID-19 related blogs, videos, and news articles were posted on the SNEUCC conference website.

Return to School

The U.S. Department of Education has prepared a resource for parents on returning to in-person learning. This Return to School Roadmap has helpful information on vaccination, health and safety protocols, access to safe transportation to and from school, conversations with teachers about a child's needs, and The Child Tax Credit in the American Rescue Plan.

Because of the highly transmissible nature of the Delta variant, along with the extent of mixing of vaccinated and unvaccinated people in schools, the fact that children <12 years of age are not currently eligible for vaccination, and low levels of vaccination among youth ages 12-17, CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all students (age 2 years and older), teachers, staff, and visitors to K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status. Local school authorities working with local health departments will determine the level of additional protection strategies necessary by monitoring levels of community transmission, vaccination coverage, and screening testing. The CDC offers a list of questions that parents can ask to learn more about their school's COVID-19 precautions.

Mental Health First Aid offers Back to School: Five Ways to Support Your Children to ease the back-to-school transition for parents and their children.

SEPTEMBER HEALTH OBSERVATION DATES:

Flu Season 2021: For the 2021–2022 influenza season, influenza vaccination will be paramount to reduce the impact of respiratory illnesses attributed to influenza and resulting burdens on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CDC offers information on the frequently asked questions related to influenza. The CDC recommends the annual flu vaccination for everyone six months and older, with few exceptions.

September is National Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month:

With the stress of the ongoing pandemic, it's important to be aware of the mental health challenges we or our loved ones may be facing. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7 support at 1-800-273-8255 and additional resources at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Deborah Ringen MSN, RN-BC, Minister of Health and Wellness for the Southern New England Conference, UCC has posted a blog, Be Aware, Show You Care, for suicide awareness. It includes links to many resources related to risk factors, warning signs, responses during and after a crisis, and lifelines.

OCTOBER HEALTH OBSERVATION DATES:

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

The American Cancer Society dedicates the month of October to raising awareness about the benefits of finding and treating breast cancer early. Information can also be found at the National Breast Cancer Foundation website.

For those who are due for a mammogram and have been recently

vaccinated for COVID-19, the CDC offers information about timing the mammography exam.

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION:

Healthy People Initiative:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Healthy People initiative establishes 10-year national health objectives and provides states, cities, communities, and individuals with the data and tools to collaboratively achieve health targets and goals. An "End of Decade Snapshot" provides an overview of progress made over the past decade in meeting the Healthy People 2020 objective targets. The report highlights areas for which the initiative made progress, and areas that still need improvement.

Healthy People 2030 is the fifth iteration of the Healthy People Initiative. Healthy People 2030 includes 355 core - or measurable - objectives and developmental and research objectives.

Leading Health Indicators (LHIs) are a small subset of high-priority Healthy People 2030 objectives selected to drive action toward improving health and well-being. Most LHIs address important factors that impact major causes of death and disease in the United States. Each listed indicator on this webpage has a link for more detailed information related to that health indicator.

A New National Office:
HHS announced the establishment of the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (OCCHE). This is the first office of its kind at the national level to address climate change and health equity. The Office's mission is to protect communities that disproportionately bear the brunt of pollution and climate-driven disasters, such as drought and wildfires, at the expense of public health.

ON-LINE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:

Copyright Concerns for Ministries

The Insurance Board is offering a free Webcast on **September 29th at 2:00 pm eastern time** on **Copyright Concerns for Ministries.** Register now for the webcast.

Health Ministries Association Annual Conference

This conference will be held virtually over 3 weeks in October, with sessions offered 2 days each week. The brochure includes

Description: During these challenging times, ministries rely heavily on the virtual environment and various electronic mediums to share the printed forms of inspiring poetry, quotes from prayer books and daily affirmations, as well as words from songs during worship and through other forms of ministry. As a result, some ministries have been shocked to discover they are actually in violation of copyright infringement; join us as Heather Kimmell, General Counsel, United Church of Christ, offers valuable information on how to help your ministry avoid this situation.

dates, descriptions of the keynote presentations and workshops, schedules, and fees. Registration is now open.

On Thursday, October 14th, Alyson Breisch, chair of the UCC Wellness Ministries leadership team, will be presenting: *Once and Again: Wisdom Revealed Through Shared Narratives.*

WELLNESS MINISTRIES UPDATE:

The Wellness Ministries Toolkit is progressing. The complete toolkit will be posted online in a book format that can be easily searched and read. Active links will lead to additional information that enables readers to go deeper into a topic of interest.

A short video, ***An Overview of Wellness Ministries,*** has been developed. It is can be viewed below or at the Wellness Ministries section of the UCC website.

KEEP CONNECTED:

Visit our Facebook and LinkedIn pages: Post comments or share information about your health ministries; join in conversations.

Future issues:

- Are you looking for a resource to assist you in your ministry?
- Do you have something you want to share with colleagues?
- Do you have an innovative way you've continued to provide wellness ministries during this past year?

Let us hear about it – you could be featured in the "WELLNESS MINISTRIES MOMENT" section of the newsletter.

Contact us, wellnessministries@ucc.org

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